



LORD HAWKE.

(From a photo by  
Russell.)

## LORD HAWKE AT HOME:

A CHAT WITH THE CAPTAIN OF THE YORKSHIRE CRICKET TEAM.

BY OWEN CONWAY.



ONE of the pleasantest interviews I have ever had was on the occasion of my recent visit to Lord Hawke, in his country house, Wighill Park, Tadcaster. My journey to York

in the luxurious corridor train was speedy and comfortable; thence, after viewing the exquisite interior of York Minster, I took train to Thorp Arch. A rapid drive in the crisp morning air brought me at last to the home of the popular cricketer.

The Right Hon. Martin Bladen, seventh Baron Hawke, is the son of the late peer, whom he succeeded in 1887. He was born August 16, 1860, so is thirty-seven years of age. The first Baron, whose portrait has an honoured place in Lord Hawke's large collection, was the admiral who gained the great naval victory off Cape Finisterre in 1747, and twelve years later defeated Admiral Confans off Belle Isle. Lord Hawke treasures especially a letter written on the eve of battle by his famous ancestor.

Yorkshiremen, or, for the matter of that, cricketers all over the world, need no pen-portrait of the subject of this article. The tall, stalwart figure, the genial face, the cheery voice of Lord Hawke are familiar to the countless thousands who have seen him play cricket in England, America, Australia, Africa, and India; and they know better than I would like to say all the good qualities which have made him so popular and esteemed a man. The county of sportsmen—as one may term Yorkshire—showed its regard for the triumphant captain of the cricket eleven by presenting Lord Hawke with a testimonial of over £800. This handsome sum was spent in excellent portraits, by Mr. Francis Williams, of the Dowager Lady Hawke and her distinguished son; a beautiful dressing-bag, fitted with silver-mounted contents; and a silver dessert-service of twenty-one pieces. I had the pleasure of seeing these tokens of regard and am certain they are greatly appreciated by their owner.

Our conversation took place, after lunch,

in the billiard-room, which is decorated with ever so many photographs of well-known cricketers and the various teams which Lord Hawke has taken on tour. Near the fireplace I noticed a cricket-ball mounted in silver and asked its history.

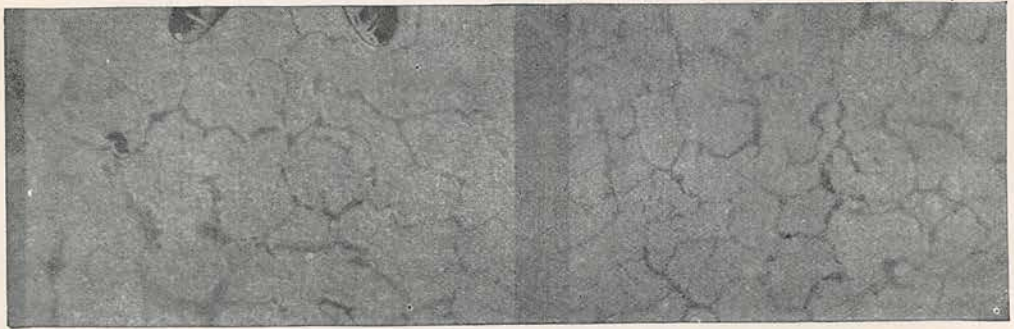
"Oh, that was given me by Mr. C. W. Wright to commemorate my startling success as a bowler once! It bears the inscription, 'A. Z. Palmer, c. Ricketts, b. Hawke. Witness, Chawles! Ottawa, October 24, 1891.'"

One could not, if one desired, talk of anything but the noble game of cricket in such a room where the faces of famous players glance from all the walls. There are framed prints of the Pavilion at Lords, crowded with familiar frequenters; portraits of the redoubtable W. G. Grace batting, of an Indian Thakore who patronises the game, and group after group of cricketers whom Lord Hawke

keep fresh under such a great and incessant strain. I shall never forget seeing Richardson bowling from three till nearly seven o'clock under a very hot sun and with undiminished effect all the while. He certainly is a most extraordinary man."

"A good deal has been said about the cracked state of the ground in excuse for the defeat of Stoddart's men."

"Yes, I have heard and read a good deal about that, but from my knowledge of Australian wickets I do not attribute much to that cause. It does not really affect the wickets so much as you would think. The heat is a serious factor for Englishmen. You see, when the Australians come over here, our hottest summer is only pleasant to them; but when we go over there, their ordinary summer is very trying to us. Darling has been playing wonderfully, and if he is persuaded to come to England with the



A SNAPSHOT BY J. PHILLIPS, THE UMPIRE, SHOWING THE CRACKS IN THE PITCH DURING THE SECOND TEST MATCH IN AUSTRALIA, ON CONCLUSION OF SECOND INNINGS OF STODDART'S TEAM.

has captained. So I caught the inspiration of my environment and began a long and interesting conversation with my host.

"Of course you have been interested in the recent test matches?"

"Oh, yes! I have read the reports with great avidity and am as disappointed as can be at the failure of our Englishmen. But I know how difficult it is to play cricket in Australia under a burning sun, in a peculiar light, and amid altered conditions."

"To what do you attribute the repeated defeats of Stoddart's team?"

"I think the Englishmen were outbowled from beginning to end. They relied too much, perhaps, on the expected success of Richardson and one or two other men. In my opinion Richardson was rather stale when he started, for he had been bowling practically all the season. His endurance is remarkable, but it is impossible for a great bowler to

next Australian team, he will be quite an attraction."

"Do you approve of these matches being so protracted, Lord Hawke?"

"I must say personally that I do not hold with the constant adjournments of which we have read in the reports. I think it is a big mistake for the batsmen and the bowlers, just when each has got his eye in, to leave the wickets with the fieldsmen for an interval at tea-time. Of course, one must adjourn for lunch, but I have done my best to prevent the tea interval. Sometimes when it has been arranged for a brief interval, I have promised my men to have something sent out to them on the field to save them going into the pavilion. If I were not able to field from 2.45 till half-past six I should begin to suspect my strength. Then there is such a want of uniformity about these intervals, and that causes unfairness.

Only last season, in a three days match, we wasted a lot of time the first two days over adjournments, and then on the third day had only three and a quarter hours in which to try and make 200 runs. The captain of the other side never suggested a tea interval on that day, for he was set upon getting us out. I can understand the bowlers want refreshment more than batsmen, for their work takes it out of them much more, but it would always be possible to have the refreshments sent out to the men instead of wasting the time which a retirement to the pavilion necessitates."

"You are a great believer in these tours, I think?"

"Yes, for I am certain that a properly-arranged tour does a good deal for the spread of Imperial Federation. Wherever Englishmen go they take cricket with them, and it is pleasant for them, away from the home country, to see cricketers once more. Besides, we spread a love of the game. I do not like the idea of tours being run for pecuniary benefit. In fact, the financial side of cricket is one on which I hold very strong views.

There is a great danger of the game being spoiled by the money question, and I have done my best to keep the position of amateurs clear. At the same time, you know, I have also a great sympathy with professionals as long as they lead steady lives. A great many of them are first-rate fellows, and as pleasant on tour as anybody could be. There is nothing I value more than the beautiful gold cigarette-case which the Yorkshire professionals gave me not long ago as a token of their esteem. If a professional cricketer takes care of himself,

he can make an excellent living, provided he is thrifty, and at the end of his career there is a benefit of perhaps a £1,000 or £1,500 as a nest-egg. Some people talk of amateur cricketers being better "triers" than professionals, but I do not think so. Your amateur is quite as keen on his averages and his personal reputation as the professional making his living at the game, and both, if they are first-class men, are determined to win on every possible occasion. No one has any idea how mortifying it is to a cricketer

if he fails to come off. To give you an instance: when Moorhouse was being slated by the press he was in dreadfully low spirits over it, and in every match he did his utmost to justify his inclusion in the eleven. The public ought to have a little more sympathy for us when we do not come off as well as when we do. While I am talking about the game from the spectators' point of view, I should like to say that no cricketer likes a wet day, though you may imagine, from the behaviour of the crowd sometimes, that the elevens were revelling in enforced idleness.

The moment the rain stops the public are ready to demand that we should go out into the field, forgetting that we have no ambition to be mudlarks. I think it is a little unfair that the onus of settling whether the wickets are fit for play should rest only upon the shoulders of the umpires. In the old days the captains decided on the matter, and if in doubt we abode by the judgment of the umpires. Now umpires have to bear the brunt of unpopularity, and sometimes a good deal of unpleasant hooting, in consequence of their decision. Spectators have still a



From a photo by

[Hawkins, Brighton.]

LOED HAWKE AT THE WICKET.

great deal to learn as to fair play both in football and cricket. The treatment of referees, I may say in passing, is becoming a regular scandal. I am almost inclined to think nowadays that too much is made of individual success or failure. A nervous cricketer is affected by the barometer of his averages. Years ago it was more the question of winning the match than of pulling up your averages. Besides, averages are very misleading. I have read only this week an elaborate article with a view to proportioning the value rather than the total of the different scores a cricketer makes. For instance, a man may save a match by twenty-two runs and render a more important service than by making 150 on another occasion. Still, there is no possibility, I must admit, of taking circumstances into consideration when you are dealing with figures."

"What is the most exciting match in which you have played?"

Lord Hawke leaned back in his chair, put his hands behind his head, and thought for a minute or two. Then he said, "Well, that *is* a question! I think the most exciting time I ever had was when we lost the match against Essex by only one run. The game seemed so certainly ours that the result was all the more mortifying."

"When did you begin to play cricket?"

"I can hardly tell you when I did not play cricket. My father was very keen on the game, and when I went to Hawtrey's School I soon began to be enthusiastic over it, too. Then I went to Eton, where I played in the eleven four or five times in 1876. I played for Eton *v.* Harrow, at Lord's, in 1878 and 1879. I went on to Cambridge, and in 1882 was in the eleven. At the end of the season I had the average of 24.3. Next year I was fourth in the batting averages with 25.4, which was fairly good, considering I had hurt my knee. I made 141 against England and played thirteen innings for Yorkshire County team. It seems strange, but I am the only man in the county eleven who was playing for Yorkshire seventeen years ago. Perhaps you would be surprised to hear that I began as a left-hander. I urge boys at school to take up cricket rather than rowing, for you cannot make a river very easily, but you can usually make a cricket-field. As a kid I knew all about the cricketers of the day—Jupp, W. G. Grace and his two brothers, and the rest of them. I always had a good memory for names, so long as they are told me correctly at first, with the initials."

Certainly Lord Hawke manifested in our conversation, lasting some hours, a most remarkable recollection of events, names and scores. He seemed never at a loss to give the exact figures of a match, however long ago it was played, or the name of anyone with whom he happened to have been associated. He has a kind word to say of nearly all the players of the day, and naturally waxes enthusiastic over the achievements of the Yorkshiremen. Every year he entertains the latter at Wighill Park, and the occasion is most enjoyable to host and guests. Lord Hawke's mother, sisters and brothers share his love of cricket, and follow the fortunes of the county with keen interest.

"Of course, Lord Hawke, you have especial acquaintance with the difficulties of captaincy?"

"Well, few people have any idea of the worry, work, and anxiety which belong to the captain of a county team, who of all the eleven is most subject to criticism. It is no use denying that most men do not enjoy criticism, however salutary it may be for them. I had a letter only the other day from a prominent editor saying that, as a public man, I ought to feel myself inured to criticism; but I am afraid I do not yet awhile. People won't believe that I am nervous, but I am horribly so; and criticism makes me more nervous. For instance, I was completely out of form for two or three years, as you may probably remember, and was perfectly willing to stand out of the eleven, especially in face of the continued carping as to why I was still playing for the county. Now, every criticism made me feel worse when I walked to the wickets, and took away my confidence. I have come to the conclusion that the secret of success for a captain is to give up trying to please everybody. Tact and good temper are quite as important as knowledge in a captain, and he has plenty of need of both. You cannot imagine the amount of letter-writing that is necessary in making the arrangements for a season or for a tour. Fortunately, I enjoy correspondence, and never have any difficulty, once I have a pen in my hand, in writing a score of letters. I have always endeavoured to keep up correspondence with any people who have been kind and hospitable to our teams abroad. Too often, I am afraid, we are inclined to taking these cases of generosity for granted, and imagine we are conferring a favour instead of receiving one. Some of the people who were good to me in India put themselves out of the way in entertaining

me much more than English people would think of doing. I can tell you it is no joke to give hospitality in an out-of-the-way part of India to a band of ravenous English cricketers!"

"I believe you have taken out more tours than any other cricketer?"

"I have been on seven tours altogether, and look back on them with very pleasant memories. My visit to Australia in 1887 was unfortunately brief, owing to the death of my father, which caused me to return at once to England. We had a very nice tour in the West Indies, and, if you recollect, we went to South Africa, arriving just when the Raid was about to take place. There was a question as to whether we should get any spectators at such an exciting time, but I may tell you that the people in South Africa took a great interest in our games, and I should like to return there some day. One thing always worries me on

these tours. I do not think you will guess what it is, so I had better tell you: it is the amount of speechifying that is necessary. I have often said that I would rather make a duck before a large crowd than speak in public! To speak at each town

on a tour is much more difficult than the casual speeches that one delivers at home, for there is nothing fresh that one can say about the merits of one's team. I

recollect in India we were entertained by Lord Harris (then Governor of Bombay), and on that occasion we had suffered an unexpected defeat from the Parsees. Lord Harris began by saying that he had prepared a speech for a victorious team and was hampered by the unfortunate reverse we had sustained. When I responded, I began by saying that I also had prepared a very nice speech for a victorious captain to deliver, and that I was placed in a serious predicament by our friends the Parsees!"

And thus, with many an interesting reminiscence, our chat progressed till I took my leave for London. I said good-bye to Lord Hawke with a still stronger belief than I entertained before that he has done his country good

and lasting service by devoting half his life to the game which all Englishmen love; and when, in process of time, he has to resign the willow, he will be qualified for holding any post where knowledge of men and true governing ability may be exercised on another field.



"SPY'S" CARTOON OF LORD HAWKE.  
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